



# PRESIDENT'S NEWSLETTER

## | January 2016 |

### My Perspective - Letters to the Rockford Region

#### Workforce Development A Necessity

More and more industries are demanding workforces capable of being employed in advanced manufacturing operations. The skill sets required to program, operate and maintain the type of equipment used in advanced manufacturing are different and more advanced than required previously.

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#### The RAEDC and the Rockford Region

The RAEDC, as the Economic Development Agency for the region is also the data collection agency on all new capital investment in the area, retained and created jobs and renovated space. As we enter into our Rockforward20/20 plan, we will be informing all of you on project wins for our region as well as projects that we are working on with our various regional partners.

## Measurements

#### Regional Impact Measurements

These figures represent the first month of successes during the new Rockforward20/20 campaign. The campaign began in January 2016 and will continue through December 2020.

New or Retained Jobs

36

Capital Investment

\$18  
Million

Renovated or  
New Space

132,500  
Square Feet

There were two wins in January leading to these Regional Impact Measurements. One company expanded their facility to accommodate increased production needs. The other company consolidated its operations choosing Rockford over it's out of state facility.

## RAEDC Updates

**Stronger Companies Through Workforce Development** - One of the major paradigm shifts we have seen in the world of Economic Development is a slight shift away from incentives and more focus on Workforce Development and the Education of our workforce. In the coming year, the Business Expansion and Retention Team will focus on Education for Workforce, and Workforce Development.

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**Business Retention and Expansion Team has a Full Schedule 2016** - We will continue with our Voice of the Customer Surveys (VOCs) while exploring new options with the Synchronist System where we will not only report on the data received but also report on how the VOC give RAEDC the pulse on businesses that may need economic development assistance.

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**Business Attraction Team Courts Chicago Site Selectors** - The RAEDC recently exhibited at the 14th Annual Commercial Real Estate Forecasting Conference. The event presented the opportunity to meet with Chicagoland based Site Selectors furthering the education process about what opportunities the Rockford Region has to offer. Representing the RAEDC was Mike Nicholas, President and Dennis McCarthy, Director of National Business Development.

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**Shovel Ready Digs into a Qualified Topic** - Members including developers, realtors and municipalities concluded the workshop with a consensus that the Rockford Region Qualified Site Program would also incorporate the Shovel Ready Sites. As we further define and develop these criteria it is critical our program brings consistent credibility to the market.

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## Regional Wins

**PCI Consolidates Locations** - Leading pharmaceutical outsourcing provider PCI Pharma Services has announced it is transitioning its commercial packaging operation to its Rockford, IL campus.

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**Illinois LEEDS** - The state of Illinois is at the top for the 3rd year in a row in Green Building; with 3.43 square feet of LEED certified space per resident - .39 square feet per resident (or 34 additional projects) more than second place.

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**Knock-down Events Coming to the Rockford Region** - The Rockford Region has been selected to host multiple bowling tournaments over the next few years. This includes the Illinois Girls State Bowling Finals, the Illinois Youth State Tournament, Youth PEPSI State Finals and the Men's State tournament.

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**Key Realty Moves Headquarters** - Key Realty is a locally owned full service real estate company that provides residential, commercial, industrial, investments, land, foreclosures, rental and new construction services. Key Realty hosted a ribbon cutting at their new headquarters in Rockford, IL.

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## Regional Good News

**Evac North America Stays & Expands** - Growth Dimensions of Belvidere, Boone County joined Evac North America in announcing the company would not only remain in their current location but also be expanding.

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**Downtown Revitalization Video** - The River District Association recently released a video showcasing some of the experiences available in the Downtown Rockford area.

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**CNC Machine Donated to Local School** - The Roosevelt High School and Community Education Center unveiled their CNC Machining Center. The machine was installed and made operational in December 2015 for use by students interested in making machining and manufacturing a component of their career choices.

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**2015 Marks Three Years of Record System Reliability for ComEd Customers** - ComEd smart grid and system improvements help avoid millions of customer interruptions - resulting in over \$1 billion in societal savings. Since 2012, ComEd has been implementing smart grid and other system improvements across its territory to strengthen and modernize the grid - and those investments are paying off for customers with record reliability.

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**Practice Velocity Best in KLAS** - Congratulations to Practice Velocity. They have been ranked #1 2015/2016 Category Leader for Urgent Care in the 2015/2016 Best in KLAS: Software & Services report. In 2014, the medical software and services company spent \$8 million to rehabilitate a vacated Kohl's store in the former Machesney Park Mall. Practice Velocity built state-of-the-art offices in the 63,000-square-foot space.

**SBA Loans To Offer Refinancing Option** - On December 18, 2015 Congress voted to allow 504 Debt Refinancing as a permanent option for US Small Business Administration (SBA) loans. These loans are available for starting a business, providing working capital, purchasing property or equipment and other business based uses.

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**RVC Doubles AMT Program Enrollment** - The Aviation Maintenance Technology program at Rock Valley College has doubled enrollment compared to a year ago. The 80 students will be guaranteed an interview with AAR Corp. upon graduation for the Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO) facility expected to be completed in 2016.

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## RAEDC Staff Updates

### Leading in the Rockford Region

The RAEDC is proud to announce two staff members will be participating in the Chamber of Commerce's Leadership Rockford Alliance. Stacy Bernardi has been sponsored by Woodward, Inc. and Jimsi Kuborn has been sponsored by Thayer Lighting. The 2016 program focuses on concepts from Stephen M.R. Covey's Leading at the Speed of Trust. This includes aspects of trust at work, in the community and as individuals. The yearlong program seeks to fill leadership gaps that have been identified in the Rockford Region.



Stacy Bernardi,  
VP for Business  
Development



Jimsi Kuborn, VP  
of Investor  
Relations

## Rockforward20/20

Rockforward20/20 represents a bold vision for our future, this aggressive plan will cultivate opportunities to create and retain over 10,000 jobs and significantly increase capital investment in the region.

Learn more at [RockfordIL.com/Rockforward2020](http://RockfordIL.com/Rockforward2020). If you have not set up a brief meeting to explore how you can get involved, contact Jimsi Kuborn at 815-969-4259 or [jkuborn@rockfordil.com](mailto:jkuborn@rockfordil.com).



## The RAEDC

The RAEDC often works behind the scenes due to the confidential nature of business projects. Plus, big deals take time: The average time from start to completion on the 24 project wins in 2015 was 329 days.

We are committed to persistence and continuity in our work: We market the Rockford Region to the world, influencing companies to locate or expand here. We support and promote growth within targeted industries through regional public-private collaboration. We assist prospective and existing companies by connecting them to resources for workforce development, available buildings, supply chain partners, incentives and more.

Together, we will continue the momentum into 2016 for an even stronger, more sustainable economy. **Together, we will Trailblaze, Inspire Action, Align, Seed and Serve!**

Michael Nicholas, President  
[MNicholas@RockfordIL.com](mailto:MNicholas@RockfordIL.com)

### ABOUT THE RAEDC

The primary role of the Rockford Area Economic Development Council (RAEDC) is to collaboratively improve the economic strength of the Rockford Region by helping employers retain and create quality jobs. The RAEDC works closely with many partners to learn what existing and new employers need to grow, and to serve as a one-stop resource for clients. The RAEDC seeks to improve the competitiveness of the region by taking what it learns from the region's employers, and engaging the community in the daily work of economic development.

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#### Rockford Area Economic Development Council

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